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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KTIP](#) [KCRM](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR VISITS GOVT TIP SHELTER; MORE VICTIMS
RESCUED

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 212 -- GOVT SHELTERS OPEN

Summary and Comment

¶1. (SBU) The Ambassador visited the Malaysian government's trafficking victims' shelter for women in Kuala Lumpur on December 17 at the invitation of the Women's Minister. The shelter housed 11 adult victims of sex trafficking, while the nearby children's shelter housed four girls. A senior Women's Ministry official noted the shelter personnel had limited experience and welcomed U.S. expertise. With the most recent raids, Malaysian authorities have rescued at least 79 suspected sex trafficking victims since March of this year. We were left with the impression that the Women's Ministry is well intentioned in its operation of the shelters, but its approach to protecting and assisting victims could benefit from exposure to international best practices. End Summary.

Ambassador Witnesses Shelter in Operation

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador conducted a one and one half-hour visit of the GOM's TIP shelter for women victims in Kuala Lumpur on December 17 at the invitation of the Women's Minister. Noorul Ainur, Director General, Department of Women's Development within the Women's Ministry, escorted the Ambassador. Both the Kuala Lumpur women's shelter and the nearby children's TIP shelter are renovated two-story homes with a normal capacity of about 20 people each. At the time of the visit, the women's shelter housed 11 victims of sex trafficking: seven Indonesians, two Vietnamese, and two Indians. The children's shelter housed four sex trafficking victims; two Indonesians and two Thai. We found the women's shelter clean and seemingly well organized, with a kitchen and living room on the first floor, and sleeping quarters on the second floor. Consistent with photos provided to the Department earlier this year, the shelter is enclosed by a fence and barbed wire, and access is restricted to operational personnel only. Two security guards and two to four protection officers are on duty at any given time. The women receive training in sewing and other basic skills. The shelter also provides counseling sessions. The Ambassador spoke briefly with some of the women who volunteered (in limited English) their experiences and their desire to go home.

¶3. (SBU) Director General Noorul discussed the shelter operations in an open and frank manner. She admitted that the Ministry's protection officers assigned to the shelters have limited experience and explained she has met with NGOs, including the Women's Aid Organization, to get their feedback on shelter operations. Noorul requested U.S. expertise and models for operating TIP shelters, and the Ambassador pledged to provide any relevant information. We informed Noorul that

the United Nations Interagency Program on Trafficking in Persons (UNIAP), with regional offices in Bangkok, is interested in meeting with the GOM to discuss training programs. (Comment: Embassy met with UNIAP in November, encouraged the project to expand activities to Malaysia, and provided UNIAP with GOM and civil society contact information. End Comment.) Noorul informed the Ambassador that the third TIP shelter, recently designated in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, is currently under renovation and should be ready for operations in January. Throughout the meeting, Noorul expressed the Ministry's willingness to cooperate with the Embassy and told the Ambassador that excluding translators, he was the first foreign guest to visit the shelter.

Recent Raids Free More Victims

14. (SBU) Most of the victims we saw at the shelter had been rescued from sex trafficking in mid-December. Police conducted at least three raids to rescue suspected sex trafficking victims in the greater Kuala Lumpur area. In one case, an Indonesian victim escaped the traffickers and filed a police report, leading to a raid on a location, operating as a "massage center" in the Kuala Lumpur suburb of Damansara, that freed another six Indonesian women and two Indonesian girls, both reportedly age 17. Police rescued two Thai girls, ages 16 and 17, from Sentul, also in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. The Embassy is seeking further details on these cases. With the most recent raids, Malaysian authorities have rescued at least 79 suspected sex trafficking victims since March of this year.

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